TWO SCOTTISH THIRTEENTH CENTURY SONGS with the original melodies,

recently discovered in Sweden

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In the course of research in the Library of Upsala University Prof. Sir Oluf Kolsrud, of Oslo, and D.D. of Glasgow, lighted upon and examined a collection of parchments of various content dating from the second half of the thirteenth century. Among the MSS. of this Codex Upsalensis C 233 were two unrecorded Latin songs, the one an Epithalamium or Hymn sung at the wedding of the Princess Margaret of Scotland to King Eric of Norway at Bergen in 1281; and the other a Hymn in honour of St. Magnus, the Earl of Orkney, who died in 1115 and was enshrined in 1135 at Birsay. Finally the shrine was placed in the Cathedral at Kirkwall which still bears his name. The text and melodies are quite free from error, a fact which indicates that here we have copies very near to the originals. The songs are of course in Latin and the melodies are in the ancient notation.

The Norwegian King Magnus died in Bergen on the 9th of May, 1280, and his son Eric immediately succeeded him. On the 27th of that month the new King sent a letter to Edward I of England reporting the death of his royal father and intimating that his coronation would take place in due time. To King Alexander III of Scotland there was sent an embassage suggesting the desirability of a marriage between the young King Eric and the Princess Margaret. Political considerations probably prompted the proposal and the suggestion was welcomed. A Scottish embassy took back a favourable reply. Negotiations occupied about a year; but the final Marriage Contract was drawn up and signed at Roxburgh Castle on 25th July, 1281.

THE MARGARET-ERIC MARRIAGE CONTRACT.

In August, 1937, nine, out of 170 historical documents that had been missing from Scotland for 650 years, were transferred from the Record

Office in London to the Register House in Edinburgh. Of these sole surviving documents returned from exile the longest and best preserved is the Marriage Contract between the daughter of King Alexander III of Scotland, Princess Margaret, and King Eric II of Norway.

King Alexander had married the daughter of the English King Henry III. Their daughter was called Margaret after her mother, and she was famous for her beauty and her gentle character. Among the witnesses to the Margaret-Eric Contract are found Barons of Norman stock as well as representatives of the old Scottish nobility. The seals of the signatories are lacking, but tabs show where they were affixed.

The Norse and Scots had for long been warring with one another, and this state of matters culminated at the battle of Largs in 1263, following which, by the Treaty of Perth, the Hebrides were united to Scotland. Thereafter friendlier relations commenced, and the marriage of Eric and Margaret was intended to cement the bonds between the two countries; and here is the gist of the contract.

King Alexander for himself, and in name of "the noble damsel Margaret, his dearest daughter," with consent of his son and the whole of the King's Council on the one part, and Peter Bishop of Orkney, Berner Baron of Berkrey, and Friar Maurice of the Minorite Order, on the other part, agree to the marriage between King Eric and the Princess Margaret.

Alexander contracted to give with his daughter a dowry of 14,000 marks sterling, to be paid at Bergen in four instalments, the first to be taken with Margaret to Norway. The Norse representatives promised, on behalf of King Eric, that the Princess Margaret on her arrival in Norway should receive 14,000 marks worth of land, and a castle or secure mansion, where she with her servants should remain at the expense of King Eric until the nuptials were celebrated, and that on the wedding day Margaret should be crowned as queen. And provision was made for the disposal of the land and money in the event of the death either of Eric or Margaret, and for allowances for any issue of the marriage.

"XVI. If it shall happen that the King of Scotland decease without a lawful son and that none of his sons leave lawful issue, and that the said Margaret have children to the King of Norway, then she and her children shall succeed to the said King of Scotland and his whole estate; otherwise she herself, if she be without children, according to the law of Scotland. And generally the King of Scotland consents that his said daughter and all descending from her shall be admitted freely to all succession and all rights which they can have according to the law of Scotland."

The King of Norway shall hold binding all the above premises and shall fully ratify the same; otherwise he shall pay to the King of Scotland for damage, interest and expenses, the sum of froo,000 sterling under

pain also of forfeiting the sum of 100 marks which he receives yearly from the King of Scotland, with the whole land of Orkney. Likewise King Alexander obliges himself, if Margaret fail to fulfil the agreement to pay a like sum of £100,000 to the King of Norway and to transfer the whole Isle of Man.

The Norwegian signatories promise that the Queen Mother of Norway and the magnates of the realm shall ratify this Contract; and the King of Scotland and his daughter have ratified the same in the presence of the representatives of the King of Norway; and certain personages become hostages to remain with the King of Scotland until the marriage is completed; and, if they are not then released, the Isle of Man will be surrendered.

On the 11th August, 1281, Princess Margaret embarked at Berwick for Norway. She was accompanied by the Earl and Countess of Menteith, Bernard of Montealto (Mowat), the Abbot of Balmerino, and others. Four days later the ship dropped anchor in the port of Bergen. Naturally King Eric received his bride with becoming honour, and the whole populace welcomed the Scottish Princess with demonstrations of great joy; and the clergy, in their various robes of office, conducted a service of thanksgiving for the safe journey and arrival of the queen-to-be.

According to the Marriage Contract the wedding was to take place before the 8th September; but by the 31st August every arrangement for the nuptials had been made. Archbishop Jon and all the bishops, with most of the chiefs and magnates of the land, were gathered for the occasion. It had been agreed that Margaret should be crowned on the wedding day. For some reason the King's mother, Queen Ingebjorg was opposed to this; but the coronation was duly proceeded with, the Archbishop himself discharging the duty with great ecclesiastical ceremonial, as had been customary in Norway. And at the wedding and coronation services the recently discovered Epithalamium was rendered by a choir in unison or as an alternative Hymn by two choirs.

The Latin verses have been freely rendered thus:

HYMN FOR THE MARRIAGE OF PRINCESS MARGARET AND KING ERIC.

From thee, O fairest Scotland, springs that light benign Which over Norway like a radiant dawn doth shine. Breathe freely now once more, since God doth safely bring Across the perilous seas, the daughter of thy King.

And now the torch of peace is lit: his royal grace, This day proclaimed and sealed, rejoiceth all our race. The skies on every side with acclamations shake, While England, most of all, doth in the joy partake. Lo! to King Eric now is brought the royal maid To whom with fitting pomp is highest honour paid. With one accord the nation breaks into her praise And songs of welcome loud a thousand voices raise.

A brilliant throng in haste assembles, dame and knight, The flower of chivalry, to view the sacred rite: Then high and low, together mingled in their glee, Speed swift the jocund hours with feast and revelry.

In triumph now the king leads forth the lovely bride, The regions of the world rejoice on every side. The God of all, this union bless with richest grace, And from this royal pair upraise a worthy race.

She mounts the throne; the crown is set upon her brows. To her, as to the King, Norwegia gladly bows; To her is highest reverence paid by high and low; All praise to God's good Son, who hath ordained it so!

Too weak are human words her virtues to express; How rich in all discretion, truth and gentleness! Her modest eloquence, how full of power! how free Her bounty, and how sweet her gracious dignity!

Like Rachel, may she ever keep her husband's love; Like Esther, with the King most high in favour prove; Like Leah, may she be with numerous offspring blest; And like Susanna, stedfast aye in virtue rest.

Long may they serve the Lord, united hand and heart, Alike in youth and age—nor even in death apart! And when the goal is reached of this their earthly race, May they receive at last the crown of heavenly grace!

From thee, O fairest Scotland, riseth evermore Subject for praise and glory to earth's furthest shore.

E. B.

Towards the end the Epithalamium expresses the hope of a long and happy life for the king and queen. But the young Queen Margaret did not live long. In 1282 she gave birth to a daughter, called Margaret after her mother. On the 5th February, 1283, King Alexander III assembled the Estates of Scotland and declared that the infant Princess Margaret was the heiress of Scotland, the Hebrides, Tynedale, Penrith and the Isle of Man. And when Alexander himself died in 1285 Margaret,

then aged three years, became Queen of Scotland. Guardians were appointed; and a treaty of marriage between the child Queen of Scots and Edward, eldest son of Edward I of England, was concluded in 1289. One may speculate on the destinies of Norway, Scotland and England if that proposed marriage had been consummated! But alas! the young Queen of Scotland, at the age of 8 years, died in Orkney in 1290 on her way from Bergen to her Scottish kingdom. Her remains were taken back to Bergen to be interred in Christ Church, where her mother had been married and buried. For King Eric's Queen had died in Tönsberg on 9th April, 1293, and her body had been brought to Bergen for burial. Eric came back to our country for a second wife and married Isabella, sister of Robert the Bruce, the future king of Scotland.

THE MUSIC FOR THE EPITHALAMIUM.

The music resembles the old French Folk Songs arranged in sequentiae. Every strophe, with few exceptions, has its independent melody and two parallel melodic links. The Tone is the First Church mode transposed to G. The melody formation is quite regular with smoothly progressing intervals and a characteristic effect is produced by frequent triplets. Towards the end the melody culminates with such rare figures in those days as double triplets and groups of five short notes.

This melody does not appear in any Folk Tunes, or in any sequentiae that followed the Gradual of the Roman Mass, that were known to the discoverer of the Hymn and its music.

THE AUTHOR OF THE EPITHALAMIUM.

The name of the author is not recorded, but we can guess it. In the Norse embassy that went to Scotland in 1281 there was a Friar Maurice from the Minorite Monastery in Bergen. He was certainly not a Norwegian by birth; indeed very probably he was a Scot. As early as 1264 he and another Minorite were on a mission to Scotland from King Magnus. And in 1270 he was one of a company of Norwegians on a crusade to Jerusalem. On his return he wrote an account of the journey; and some fragments of a copy of it, dating from about 1300, were found in the Norwegian archives in 1846. Maurice was thus an old servant of the Norwegian Court, a travelled man with literary gifts and interests; and he went to Scotland to fetch the Princess Margaret to Norway for the marriage at which the song was sung.

It is well known that Eric's father, King Magnus, favoured the Minorites. When his queen had given birth to a son the infant, according

to legend, was more like a bear than a boy. When the royal father heard this he gave command that the baby should be wrapped in a fair cloth and laid during High Mass on the altar of the Minorite Monastery at Bergen. At the end of the service they found a beautiful baby boy lying gurgling in the bundle. This legend at least shows how highly King Magnus had regarded the Franciscan Order; and the tale was told to the Scots by those who went as wooers on behalf of the young Norwegian king, and they added that Eric had grown up to be a gallant and goodly youth.

It was a Minorite monk who had been Confessor to Margaret's own mother; and so the Minorites were highly esteemed at that time in Scotland as well as in Norway. It may, therefore, have been comparatively easy for Maurice, if himself a Scot, to succeed when he pled the cause of Eric at the Scottish Court. He was evidently proud of the honour the king had shown him in sending him on such an important errand; and, if he had the will, he also had the learning and the skill to write a hymn or a poem for the wedding. If the author of the poem was a Scot, as we can believe Friar Maurice to have been, then it is easy to understand how he refers to his own homeland in the song. Possibly Friar Maurice had first been a monk in a Minorite Monastery in the Orkneys and had entered the service of the Norwegian King Haakon when he led the expedition which ended disastrously at Largs in 1263. All we can confidently say is that the author of the Epithalamium was a man in Norway, a monk or priest who could write Latin and was familiar with Church music.

HYMN IN HONOUR OF ST. MAGNUS.

Magnus Erlendson was the grandson of the great Thorfinn, Earl of Orkney which, in the eleventh century, was a province of Norway. Thorfinn defeated Duncan and won nine earldoms in Scotland and all the Hebrides. Having had enough of fighting he made his peace with God and ruled wisely till his death. His two sons, Paul and Erlend, succeeded him and divided the earldom between them, and when they died their sons, Haakon and Magnus, succeeded them. Magnus was born in Orkney about 1075. According to the Sagas he was a docile and obedient boy, pliant and attentive to his father, Erlend, and to his mother and masters, and he was kind and pleasant to all. That is the only reference to the youth of him who was to be a Norse and Scottish Earl and famous for his godly character and deeds. In 1093 we learn of him being in the train of Magnus Barelegs, the Norse King, on a viking excursion in Scotland. The lad was a favourite, and persuaded the king

to refrain from attacking Iona; but later on he fell into disfavour because, when they came to Anglesey, he refused to join in the attack on a peaceful island that had given no provocation. Rather than fight he jumped overboard and swam ashore. He made his way to his kinsman, King Edward in Scotland, where he remained for five years in the congenial company of that pious and worthy ruler. There too he wooed Ingarth, a maiden of high birth, like-minded with himself. He married her, and they lived together till his death; yet the marriage was never consummated. It seemed that both bride and bridegroom had made a vow that they would live together as brother and sister; but the Sagas say that it was often a hard struggle for Magnus to keep the vow to which they had bound themselves.

We next find Magnus in Orkney, this time Joint Earl with his cousin Haakon. But they did not get on well together, their characters and dispositions were so different. Magnus was peaceable and friendly and contented with his portion of the earldom, while Haakon was harsh, overbearing, ambitious and anxious to be sole ruler in Orkney. Eventually in 1115 their friends arranged that there should be a meeting at Egilshay to arrive at an amicable understanding. Magnus arrived with two ships as arranged, quite unsuspicious of evil; but Haakon came with eight ships fully manned and armed. The friends of Magnus besought him to seek a place of safety; but he was pursued, brought back and murdered, signing himself with the cross as he received the death stroke from an axe wielded reluctantly by one of Haakon's officers. Even Christian burial was at first refused to the dead Earl. But Haakon's aunt, Thora, the mother of Magnus, made such a touching appeal to her nephew that he gave way, and Magnus was buried in the church of Birsay. Haakon himself seems at last to have realised the enormity of his guilt, for he went on a pilgrimage to Rome and Jerusalem. And he came home again to rule well in Orkney until his death seven years after the murder.

It was on 16th April, 1115, that Magnus fell. On 13th December, 1135, he was enshrined by Bishop Vilhjalm in Birsay and thereby his cult was established. Shortly afterwards the shrine was removed to the Olaf Church at Kirkwall, and then to the new Cathedral there which bears his name.

The newly found Magnus hymn is akin in many respects to the other Latin Magnus hymns, in all of which that sketch his doings emphasis is laid on Magnus's ascetically pure marital life.

The Magnus liturgical texts were included in the Aberdeen Breviary after 1472, when the Orkneys came under the supervision of the Metropolitan of St. Andrews; and of course the local patron saint of the newly added See was introduced into the Scots Church Calendar. Magnus was Earl of Caithness as well as of Orkney, and it is possible that he may

have been worshipped in Caithness even before 1472; but his cult can scarcely have gone farther south at that period. In Norway no Latin Magnus hymns were in use, but the two Magnus Mass days were both observed: 16th April—day of martyrdom; 13th December—day of his translation.

This new Magnus hymn was not sung at the ordinary services in the See, as were the four Magnus hymns in the Aberdeen Breviary. The last two verses of the hymn indicate that it was composed for singing by a monastic *familia* or community, e.g., at one of the canonical services, such as Lauds (matins).

THE HYMN.

- Most noble Earl Magnus, a martyr most meek, Most constant and able, most ready to serve, High honoured Protector, most worthy of praise, We pray thee thy frail burdened servants to save.
- 2. Divinely endowed by the Spirit above And carefully shunning the sins of the flesh, Subduing the passions of dissolute life, The rule of the Spirit controlled thy desires.
- 3. The spouse, a royal virgin, was brought unto thee And in holy nuptials was chaste joined with chaste; And thus for the space of ten years they remained, "The bush though on fire was thus never consumed."
- 4. Thy crafty foe, Haco, with envy a-flame,
 With fire thy domains for himself did lay waste
 And sought to destroy thee with sharp edged guile
 And with a kiss of peace a false treaty to seal.
- 5. Enduring dire woes for the cause of the right,
 Betrayed, thou wert seized and a blow laid thee low,
 And death thee transported to heavenly heights
 And with martyred hosts thee united with Christ.
- 6. This glory we sing, and by miracles wrought
 The Lord Christ is blessed and the Church doth rejoice,
 And praise high ascendeth with thee as its theme.
 How blessed Orcadia from henceforth appears!
- 7. Grace, pardon and glory from Heaven do we seek Who wish for the help of thy praises and prayers. O Father, bestow us an answer, we pray, And save this thy fam'ly from judgment. Amen.

W. M. P.

THE ORIGIN OF THE HYMN.

From the wording of the hymn there is nothing directly to indicate that it was written in a monastery. We find reference to the saint's long years of virgin wedlock in the other Magnus hymns; but it is perhaps more strongly emphasised in the Upsala hymn than elsewhere (vide strophe two); and it is not only here that Magnus is praised as humilis, for in the ecclesiastical antiphone literature we find him spoken of as justus, pius et modestus.

The Magnus hymn appears in a Codex that was written in a Minorite monastery; and its author may well have been a Minorite. In any case it was probably written in a monastery of that Order in the Orkney Isles; for nowhere outside the Orkneys would the Minorites have any interest in a local Orcadian saint. The Minorite Order came into being in the 13th century, and according to the Upsala Codex C 233 such a monastery must have existed in Orkney in 1274.

The Hymn cannot have been of Norse origin; for it had mainly a local interest; and there was no room for it in the Magnus worship in Norway. But there is internal evidence, from the mode of writing, that it originated in a Norse-speaking land, such as Orkney was. We may therefore confidently conclude that Codex C 233 and its contents were written in a Minorite monastery in the Orkneys, circa 1270-1280.

Codex C 233 was in the library of the Bergen Bishop, Arne Sigurdsen. He was a member of the embassy sent to Scotland to sue on behalf of King Eric for the hand of the Princess Margaret in 1280. The embassy sailed to Scotland via Orkney; and Arne got some books from the Minorite monks there. At his death the library was disposed of. From the Minorite monastery of Bergen its wanderings can be traced to Greifswald in Germany, where it was sold by Nicolaus Netteken to Canutus Johannes, a Swedish Grey Friar, who had a long and brilliant career in many lands. Eventually he presented his fine collection of valuable books to the Grey Friar monastery at Riddarholm in Sweden. When that monastery was secularised in the sixteenth century its book collections remained as a Royal Library and were specially augmented by King John III. In 1620 Gustavus Adolphus presented the Library to the University of Upsala and it became the nucleus of that University's present magnificent Library. And among its 21 parchments from the Middle Ages Codex C 233 holds a very honourable place.

THE MELODY OF THE MAGNUS HYMN.

(The music has been translated from the ancient into the modern Notation by Herr George Reiss of Oslo, to whose Notes we have been much indebted.)

This recently discovered MS. from the thirteenth century gives us a

striking example of a two-voice setting of an Ode or Hymn on a Scottish subject. It is of special interest because parchments from that period with music for more voices than one are very rare indeed, and we know of none with any hint of harmony. One important feature of the melody is that it contains music in Thirds when the Third was still considered no true consonance. Thus the tune anticipates later methods of harmonising.

There is also another divergence from Middle Age theory. In the twelfth century the rule was that when the leading voice rose the accompanying voice must fall, and vice versa. There was thus a frequently occurring voice-crossing in the songs of that period. In the Magnus Hymn, however, there is no such crossing. The upper voice provided the descant on the actual melody carried by the lower voice. The early Scottish practice always gave the tune to the tenor, the lower part with the other voices providing a sort of descant. The laws of strict theory for part-singing were thus, in some essential points, departed from. Consequently in this Magnus Hymn we have a popular harmonising and not a setting made by a specially expert monk. We have really, as concerns two-voice compositions, just an early form of harmonising, with chords moving in Sixths.

About the year 1200 Giraldus Cambrensis describes the characteristic method of singing in Wales, whereby part songs were sung with as many parts as there were singers. He also reports that the Northumbrians made use of a similar harmonic singing, yet with only two voices, the lower humming and the upper singing the words. In these two regions no music was rendered alone, but either with several voices as in Wales, or with at least two as in Northumbria. "Even the boys, which is more surprising and, generally, children when they cry do so in the same singing way." The Northumbrians had apparently adopted this manner of singing—as they did their similarity of speech—from the Norsemen, who made so many raids there and remained for long periods.

In the Magnus Hymn, then, we have an example of the old Northumbrian two-part song. Now the MS. of the song in all probability came from the Orkneys, which at the close of the thirteenth century belonged to Norway. If the two-part singing characteristic of Northumbria was derived from the Norse, then with still greater probability did the Orcadians inherit a two-part vocal skill from Norway and preserved it. The Orcadians were mainly immigrants from that country, to which for 400 years the islands had belonged, and the bishopric of Orkney had for two centuries been subject to the Norwegian archbishopric of Nidaros or Trondheim.

The method of singing referred to by Giraldus must have been of a very special type, a peculiar quality of singing. The harmonic links

evidently had not been of the type generally employed according to the primitive part-song dogma. Moreover, emphasis must be laid on one point which particularly argues for the Norse origin of the two-voice Magnus Hynn, viz., the unmistakeable Lydian character of the melody, a well-known feature of Norse Folk music. The composer of the melody seems to have had conscious pleasure in applying the hard ringing tritone, which Middle Age theorists avoided and which they even called "the devil in music."

In England at that period the tritone seems to have been employed with much caution. By reason of the frequency of the Lydian mode in Norse Folk music and fondness for the abrupt tritone step which so often occurs therein, it may be accepted that the melody of the Magnus Hymn is Orcadian and Norwegian. The two-voice setting of the melody, with its parallel Thirds, was characteristic of the contemporary Norse two-part music. And so, because of its primitive features, the Magnus Hymn and its harmonising must be deemed to be considerably older than the end of the thirteenth century, a period when, in the leading European lands, the art of part-singing was well advanced.

Scotland should be grateful indeed to Prof. Kolsrud for the discovery or recovery of these two long-lost hymns, and for the very interesting

account of his find.

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Copies of the original account of the discovery of Codex Upsalensis C 233, entitled Tvo Norröne Latinske Kvaede Med Melodiar were presented by Prof. Kolsrud in 1938 to the National Library of Scotland and to the Library of H.M. Register House, Edinburgh.

A brief reference to the Margaret-Eric epithalamium appeared in an article on "Three Margarets" in the Scots Magazine, Vol. I, p. 344; and in Mr John Mooney's "St. Magnus, Earl of Orkney," recently published in Kirkwall, mention is made of the recovered St. Magnus Hymn.

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My personal thanks are due to Sir Walford Davies, Mus. Doc., Master of the King's Music, Windsor; and to Mr Harry M. Willsher, University College, Dundee, for helpful notes on the music of the songs.



The Hymn in Honour of St. Magnus

translated into the modern Notation.

11 No-bi-lin. hu-mi-lin. Me-macro-bi-da - bi-lia.

(t) Pro-di-tos re-li-los do-no ma-cti qui-ri-lin

tha-li-lin. a - ti-lin. co-mac no-no ma-cti qui-ri-lin

tha-li-lin. a - ti-lin. co-mac no-no ma-cti qui-ri-lin

tha-li-lin. a - ti-lin. co-mac no-no ma-cti qui-ri-lin

et tu-tor lao-da-bi-lin. to-no no obs - po-ce;

et tu-tor lao-da-bi-lin. to-no obs - po-ce;

et tu-to-lin. to-no



